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C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 000388

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SUBJECT: TWO BIRDS WITH ONE STONE: BURNS STAFFER PROPOSES
TRC-HOSTED TRAINING SESSION FOR IRAQI REGULATORS TO
JUMP-START REGIONAL TELECOM TRAINING CENTER

REF: 03 AMMAN 5798

Classified By: Ambassador Edward W. Gnehm for reasons 1.5 (b) and (d)

1. (C) SUMMARY: Sen. Conrad Burns (R-MT) staffer Myron Nordquist and Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (TRC) CEO Muna Nijem discussed a possible training session for Iraqi regulators to be held in Amman soon. The proposed training session could further Nijem's goal of establishing a regional telecom training center in Jordan, although funding will be an issue. END SUMMARY.

2. (SBU) Visiting Burns staffer Nordquist met Nijem January 14 to address two dovetailing concerns. First, Nordquist told Nijem that CPA has focused on the issue of telecommunications regulation, will identify Iraqi telecom regulators, and is ready to make specific training requests and to provide the funding necessary to make that training possible. They would like such training to take place by next month, if possible. Training could potentially take place in Jordan, Egypt, or Dubai. Second, Nordquist said Sen. Burns still would like to see a Middle East regional telecommunications training center established in Jordan on the model of Montana State University's Burns Telecom Center. If Jordan were to train CPA-designated Iraqis, the training session could serve as a "small start" to a regional training center.

3. (SBU) Nijem said that TRC was willing and could be ready within the month to provide such training, although she thought (and Nordquist agreed) that it might be better for exposure and cost/benefit reasons if such training were concurrent with the meetings of the Arab Telecommunications Regulators Network (ATRN - Reftel) that will be held in Amman the week of March 20. This being the case, the training would also be available to the delegations attending the ATRN conference. Nordquist recommended that the TRC talk to the U.S. Telecommunications Training Institute to find instructors for the session, which Nijem felt could be effectively taught in as little as two weeks.

4. (C) Nijem and Nordquist also discussed how such a session would be funded. In the long term, Nordquist would like for the startup costs of a center to be funded by USAID. However, given the urgent need for training of Iraqi telecom regulators, Nordquist thought that it might be possible to work with CPA to establish a "fast track" process involving a U.S. minority-owned (section "8A") subcontractor. This U.S.-based subcontractor would work directly with TRC paying costs directly and obviating the need for a CPA-TRC relationship that could be more complex and time-consuming to establish.

5. (C) This also suited Nijem, who asked that the CPA's involvement in the funding for this transaction be completely hidden, as the alternative would mean that the plan would have to be cleared by the Ministry of Planning. She also asked that Nordquist and Ja'afar Al-Hassan (the DCM of the Jordanian Embassy in Washington, who accompanied and took notes) say nothing about any of this to ICT Minister Fawaz Al-Zou'bi or Jordanian Ambassador to the U.S. Karim Kwar, respectively. Nijem asked instead that Nordquist send her a confidential letter laying out his (and, by extension,

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Burns,) commitment to implement the agreement outlined above. He plans to do so and to get the process moving - will brief Sen. Burns and expects the Pentagon and CPA to move ahead along these lines.

7. (C) COMMENT: Nijem is a skillful and effective regulator. However, her professed desire to cut out key GOJ figures, such as Minister Zou'bi, who support her goals, is an example of why she has trouble building alliances. Nonetheless, the plan discussed in her meeting with Nordquist seems likely to serve both the short-term necessity of training Iraqi telecom regulators and the longer-term plan to stand up a regional telecommunications training institute in Jordan. Nijem also reiterated her interest in including a telecom component in an upcoming visit to the U.S. by a Jordanian parliamentary delegation. Post is including this interest in planning for such a program.

8. Nordquist did not have an opportunity to review this

message before its transmission.
GNEHM